

## THE FOURTH SHIP OF COLUMBUS

For those of you who know  
the earth is round  
yet still cling to the brink

Remember the fourth ship  
that went with Columbus  
on his first voyage

Which we never hear of  
because it sailed off  
the edge of the world.

-- Gary Short

Virginia City NV

### GHAZAL: 1

I read the paper, hot August, getting drunk early  
before the heat makes even drinking seem an effort.

In Detroit, a man gets beaten to death  
with a six-pack of beer.

My wife in the kitchen clatters pots and pans:  
"your turn to do the dishes, fatso."

In the street, a wedding party drives by,  
horns bleeding.

I drink until the pull tabs  
sound like bullets.

### GHAZAL: 2

Once driving around a corner on two wheels  
I felt all life tilting toward another world.

A guy I pinned in 15 seconds in gym-class wrestling  
shot someone 15 times last week.

A woman who wiped spaghetti from my face  
slipped in spilled gas and went down flaming.



A foaming dog chased me down the street.  
I hopped a fence, got down on all fours and snarled back.

When I squished a rabbit in my driveway  
I smiled because it was not a child's head.

GHAZAL: 3

A man without hands dances in the aisle  
jerks his arms like machine guns.

In the corner a man soaked with sweat  
kicks and chops at the wall.

In the backroom an Indian bleeds  
broken glass from his forehead.

The bartender keeps the heads of his pet dogs  
mounted behind the bar.

Men shuffle their feet like angry bulls.  
It is too dark to see the stains on the floor.

-- Jim Daniels

Warren MI

THE MAN WHO SET THE FIRE for Russell Edson

A man comes running into the room screaming that the room next door is on fire and that everyone must get out right away. Everyone goes into the room next door to see if the man is telling the truth. When everyone finds that the man is not telling the truth everyone continues what everyone was doing before in the new room. The same man bursts into the new room screaming that the room everyone just left is on fire and that everyone must get out right away. Somewhat skeptical, everyone leaves the room and returns to the old room. When everyone again finds no fire everyone continues what everyone was doing before in the old room. The same man rushes into the old room screaming that the room everyone is in will burst into flames in exactly 3 minutes and that if everyone wants to be saved everyone will have to get out right away. Everyone bursts out in incredible laughter. Everyone continues what everyone was doing before the man first entered the room. The man now runs down the hallway and returns with